



CATHOLIC CUE Made New

COME ALIVE When should we *not* receive Communion? MINISTRY PROFILE Changing Seasons



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Dear Friends,

On the last day of this month, Sunday, March 31, we will celebrate Easter: the triumph of Jesus over sin and death! During this Lenten season, in our journey towards Easter joy, I invite us to embrace more fully the cross of Jesus.

How are we praying? Where are we seeing our Lord during this time of Lent in preparation for Easter? Are we taking time to learn more about our faith and our relationship with Jesus? Are we more loving towards others?

In the way of offering some help, I want you to know that our parish now has a subscription to FORMED, a premier online platform filled with over 4,000 Catholic studies, movies, audio dramas, talks, e-books, and even cartoons for our children. FORMED has content from over 60 apostolates, including Augustine Institute, Ignatius Press, and the Knights of Columbus, with material that is professionally produced, engaging, and solid in its catechism. Best of all, this material is free to you.

Our parish will be using the material on FORMED to support our ministries and provide continuing education for staff members and parishioners, as well as outreach for our sick and homebound members. Much of FORMED's content is available in both English and Spanish. You have easy access to all the material on FORMED to support your own faith journey and that of your family members.

Are you hesitant to return to the Sacrament of Reconciliation after a long absence? Watch Forgiven: The Transforming Power of Confession.

Would you like to be more confident in answering your teenagers' questions about the validity of the Gospels? Watch Lectio: The Case for Jesus.

Do you search for a reliable source of Catholic teaching on current issues? Tune in each week to The Augustine Institute Show with Dr. Tim Gray.

Have you despaired of finding good movies that your family can enjoy together on a Friday night? Start with Mother Teresa, the story of the selfless saint who brought hope and love to the poorest of the poor.

You can enjoy FORMED on your computer or on your smart television through the app. You can even listen on your phone as you commute to work or do chores.

My hope and prayer is that the content on FORMED will enrich, deepen, and inspire your faith. We thank and pray for our benefactors who have made our FORMED subscription a reality for our parish. Please pray for the people at the Augustine Institute who create this wonderful and muchneeded Catholic content for our people.

Yours in Christ,

Father Rich

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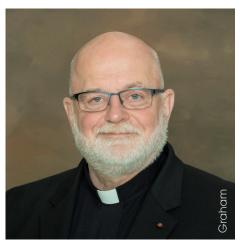
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Father Richard Roberge, Pastor of Christ the King Parish

CATHOLIC CUE

MADE NEW

Back in January, I had the absolute privilege and honor to present on the Eucharist at Emmaus, the parish's whole community catechesis program. During the weeks leading up to January's Emmaus, my preparation led me deep into Scripture, the Catechism, and a book entitled Jesus and the Jewish Roots of the Eucharist, by Brant Pitre. I thoroughly enjoyed crossreferencing those three texts and as I dove deeply into nearly all things Eucharist related, I simply couldn't express how fascinated I was at all I learned, especially in regard to Old Testament Eucharistic foreshadowing.

My findings stirred my soul so much that each time I presented – which was at least seven times counting the two live Emmaus sessions, the Emmaus video recording, and the several times I rehearsed – I was moved to tears. How is it that the God of the Universe humbled himself in such a way to make Himself food for our souls?! I loved the Eucharist before, but with this deeper knowledge and understanding, I fell even more in love with it.

The week after I presented at Emmaus, I met with the parents and children who are preparing to receive Confirmation and First Holy Communion this spring. Up on the projector screen I showed a picture of myself at nine years old, standing in my grandparents' front yard, dressed in my white First Communion dress and veil. As I started to speak to the group, my voice began to shake and I welled up with tears. "I'm married and I have four children." I began. "We're often told that our wedding day is the most important and happiest day of our lives, followed closely by the births of our children." I paused. "And don't get me wrong!" I exclaimed. "Those were *amazing* days! But..." I continued with lips guivering and tears falling from my blubbering face, "...I wish someone told me at nine years old, that, in fact, the most important day of my life would be the day I first received the Lord Jesus Christ in the most beautiful and humble form of bread and wine."

As Jesus hung on the Cross, his body having been beaten, tortured, and torn open, He looked down to the earth, through blood, spit, sweat, and tears. There, his blurry gaze fell on the beautiful face of His mother, Mary, and His beloved friend, John. But, you know who else He saw? You. Yes, you. And He knew exactly what He was doing and for whom he was dying.

C.S. Lewis said, "He died not for men, but for each man. If each man had been the only man made, He would have done no less." Our theme for Lent this year is "Love for Others" with a special focus on becoming more Eucharistic. As we venture into the rest of this Lenten desert, into Holy Week, and eventually to Resurrection Sunday, may we discover a newfound knowledge and love for our good and gracious Lord in this most precious sacrament. The God-made-man, who came to walk among us, save us from ourselves, and feed us with His Body and Blood is very much alive in His Church and waiting for you. Let us meet Him with more fervor. respect, and love this Easter. †



Jen Albee, Coordinator of Young Disciples at Christ the King

When should we not receive Communion?

Our question this month is one that makes me a bit uneasy, largely because it is something we don't usually talk about: when, as Catholics, should we not partake in the Eucharist? I bring this up not to shame anyone or bring on the old "Catholic guilt" and I certainly don't want to push anyone away from the Lord's Table. But I bring this up so that we can have an important conversation about what our Church teaches and even to normalize abstaining from Communion when we need to.

Before diving in, let us keep in mind that this whole article comes down to one thing: if we truly believe that the Eucharist is the Body of Christ; if we accept what the Church teaches us, knowing it is founded upon a rich history of Scripture and Tradition, that the God of the Universe comes to us in a form we can receive, an insignificant piece of bread, then it makes sense that there would be guidelines around the reception of such a magnificent gift.

In his first letter to the Corinthians, Saint Paul writes, "Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of profaning the body and blood of the Lord. Let a man examine himself, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup." (1 Corinthians 11:27-28) The Code of Canon Law reinforces these words of Paul declaring, "Anyone who is conscious of grave sin may not celebrate Mass or receive the Body of the Lord without previously having been to sacramental confession." (Canon 916) While certainly none of us is ever worthy of the great gift of the Eucharist,

Saint Paul challenges us to examine ourselves before we partake, and Canon Law makes it even more straightforward, stating that we must not partake if we have committed an unconfessed, grave sin (meaning, a sin of a serious matter).

This, then, begs the question: what constitutes a grave sin? To answer this, let us first consider the Five Precepts of the Catholic Church. The Precepts are the Church's minimum requirements for an individual to be considered an active, practicing Catholic, and therefore, to receive communion. If you are currently living outside of these precepts, you are warmly invited to the Sacrament of Reconciliation. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* lists the precepts as:

You shall attend Mass on Sundays and holy days of obligation and rest from servile labor
You shall confess your sins at least once a year
You shall receive the sacrament of the Eucharist at least during the Easter season
You shall observe the days of fasting and abstinence established by the Church
You shall help to provide for the needs of the Church, each according to his own abilities

We must also consider the Ten Commandments when determining our readiness for Holy Communion. And not merely the Commandments at their face value, but the depth given to them by Jesus. For example, it is not enough to say we have not killed, we must consider our anger and resentment towards others. It is up to each of us to prayerfully examine ourselves and determine if we are in a state of grave sin.

There is one last matter to address. Canon Law states, "Whoever is to receive the blessed Eucharist is to abstain for at least one hour before Holy Communion from all food and drink, with the sole exception of water and medicine." (Canon 919) If we have broken this fast, we are called to not partake of the Eucharistic feast, which means moving breakfast ahead of the drive to Mass!

If you did not know many of the guidelines in this article, you are not alone. As I said in the beginning, the intention here is not to create guilt, but to give us all a fresh start – and what better time than as we approach Holy Week and Easter. Let us end by recalling the words of the Centurion in Matthew's Gospel, the words we recite each time we attend Mass, "Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word and my soul will be healed." (Matthew 8:8) †



Haley Judd, Coordinator of Adult Discipleship at Christ the King



While she may not have known how it would all play out, Christ the King parishioner and proud St. John's School second grade educator, Debbie Otterson, did know one thing, even from a young age - "I always wanted to be a teacher," she says. "I used to set up TV trays and a little chalk board in the basement with my dolls, and when I came home from school, I would teach them." Ever attentive to detail, she would even save the stickers she would get on her own school papers, carefully remove them, and give them to her dollstudents. "I would get so bummed when I would get a stamp on my papers instead," she says with a laugh.

Born and raised in Nashua, New Hampshire, Debbie was blessed to experience both the public and the private side of the educational system. She attended the Catholic schools from first through eighth grade, graduated from Nashua Public High School, and then went on to attend college at Keene State. Debbie found herself graduating with her degree and a K-6 teaching certificate during the Recession, a time when it was difficult to find a teaching position, but her mother urged her to apply anyway. Even though she thought nothing would come of it, Debbie applied and found herself teaching half-day kindergarten at her old Catholic elementary school. Though the hours weren't much and she had to supplement her income by working at Burger King on nights and weekends, she loved her job.

Eventually, half-day kindergarten became full-day kindergarten and then she was able to move from teaching kindergarten to second grade.

Her time teaching in Nashua was a very happy, but after working there for 17 years, and in that time getting married, moving to Concord, and having two children, Debbie found that she could no longer easily make the commute every day. The idea of teaching somewhere else and the possibility of having to teach a different grade was painful. "I prayed that whole year, 'Please, God, help me to be able to leave this school, because it's really hard," Debbie says. Her faith and her prayer paid off in spades. On a whim, not even knowing if they

had any open positions, she sent her resume to the principal at St. John's. Not long after, she got a surprise call from her. "I remember the principal said, 'I haven't even posted the job yet, and I have your resume," Debbie says. After chatting for about 20 minutes, Debbie realized she didn't even know what the open position was. When she finally asked at the end of the conversation, she found out that it was for none other than the second grade. "I couldn't believe it," Debbie remembers. "All the little things fell into place."

Ever since then, for the past sixteen years, Debbie's home has been the St. John's second grade classroom and she wouldn't have it any other way. The sense of teamwork and community, where everyone is connected by the common goal of student success, has made the years fly by. "The staff is wonderful. If someone's going through a tough time, the staff are on it. We want to make sure that everyone is lifted up," Debbie says. "The parent support is huge, too. Everyone is so kind." It's one of the many reasons she knows she's exactly where she needs to be. "Part of my vocation is teaching at the school," she says. "All the families are super supportive, and I get to talk about my faith."

Debbie's faith has been strengthened by her work. "Growing up, it was more rote: I went to church, I got the sacraments," Debbie remembers. "We didn't really pray as a family." However, seeing the faith realized daily in the actions and words of her students has had a transforming effect. "The kids come out with amazing things. I can ask a question about religion and when they answer I feel that it's come right from God," she says. "They blow me away with the things they say." The witness of her students has continued to inspire her own relationship with God as

well. "I don't just 'say my prayers," I feel like I can have more of a conversation with God," Debbie says. "I've started including him in my daily life, and I've learned to trust in the direction that He's leading me to go."

Debbie also appreciates that her Catholic faith, far from being relegated to a specific class, can be integrated into all areas of academics. "In science we can talk about God's Creation, and when we're reading a story, we can tie-in the conflict to what Jesus would do in that situation," she says, "We can even do it in math." Even when the students have disagreements. she can ask them both to think about what Jesus would do. But happily, the discipline issues are few and far between, a fact that she knows isn't the same everywhere and makes her job as a teacher all the sweeter.

Of course, like anything else, she's learned as much as she's taught over the years. "I've learned to go with the flow," she says, "I can say to myself now, 'Today's lesson didn't go as well as I wanted today. Tomorrow will be better!'" She's also learned that her strength comes from God and not from herself. "When I start getting overwhelmed, I know it's because I'm not asking God to help me," she explains. Her greatest teaching successes have come from these lessons, too. Patience and trust and love can lead to transformation. "When a student is struggling and struggling and then they finally get it – those are the stories I cherish," she says.

It's the students, too, who are the reason for what she does every day. Their impact on her is powerful. "The kids are so great, and so fun, and so innocent," she says. From one child giving her a beanie baby when she was going through a tough time, to a former student turned colleague who wrote her a note outlining all the ways she was affected by her teaching, Debbie has found her years in school to be a joy and a privilege and she's not ready to give it up anytime soon. "There's the saying, 'If you love your job, then you never work a day in your life,' and I really feel that," Debbie says. "I'm excited to come to work. Even at the end of summer, I'm ready for the new year to start. This is the place to be." †





When attending Mass at our parish, it is hard not to notice the beauty of the inside of the church. Our gaze is drawn to the sanctuary where we find glorious arrangements of flowers and plants. As the year progresses, we find these decorations vary with the changing of both the liturgical and natural seasons. At times, the sanctuary is alive with color, but in other seasons, particularly during Lent, decorations are sparse. We may take these changes for granted, as something that just happens, but the floral decorations in our church result from the hard work of a dedicated team of volunteers.

Maureen Prescott is one of these volunteers. Maureen is a lifelong Catholic who was a member of St. Peter's Parish. She became involved in the Liturgical Decoration Ministry when the parishes merged. It was a stressful time and Maureen wanted to contribute to the work involved in the change so she approached the parish leadership: "I just happened to say, 'I'll help in any way I can.' I wanted to do whatever I can to make the transition easier."

As the Holy Spirit leads us, it is often not without a sense of humor. "I ended up down in the basement getting boxes for artificial flowers that were down there," Maureen says with a laugh. It turned out that her completion of this simple task would have a surprising result. Shortly thereafter, Maureen was approached by a fellow parishioner after Sunday Mass who said, "Congratulations!" Maureen was taken aback. "I said, 'Congratulations? For what?'" The parishioner answered, "You're the head of all the decorations in the church!"

With this, what began as a simple volunteer job in the church basement has transformed into a years-long ministry to Christ the King Parish which continually fills our church with beauty. Today, there are five dedicated volunteers in the Liturgical Decorations Ministry. This team of volunteers does not simply end their work when they decorate the church. It is an ongoing project to maintain the flowers and plants. This includes watering them twice a week, removing plants when they begin wilting, and making

appropriate selections when ordering more.

The Liturgical Decorations Ministry takes care of the colored linens which adorn the altar and the decorations which greet us in the narthex. A big part of the decorating involves keeping with the appropriate color for each liturgical season: purple in Advent and Lent, white during Christmas and Easter, green in Ordinary Time, rose on Gaudete Sunday (the third Sunday of Advent) and Laetare Sunday (the fourth Sunday of Lent), and red for Pentecost. Thus, the work of the Liturgical Decorations Ministry is a continual cvcle.

When reflecting on the practice of her faith and her service to the parish, Maureen talks about the wonderful people she has met and worked with over the years: "The Church is like a second family. You meet such great people." She is also grateful to have had the opportunity to serve the Lord in this way. "I always feel it's a little something to pay back to God," she says, "It's just a small donation back to Him." †

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

MARCH 2024

March 3: Deanery Penance Service

Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish on Loudon Road in Concord will be hosting the Deanery Penance Service on Sunday, March 3, at 2:30 pm. Several priests from our deanery will be available to hear confessions. All are welcome!

March 8 & 10: Emmaus

Emmaus is a place where every disciple of Christ of every age can come and grow deeper in their Catholic faith and deeper in fellowship with their church community. This month, we will discuss "Christ the Physician: The Anointing of the Sick." **christthekingnh.org/emmaus**.

March 17: Praise and Worship Prayer Service

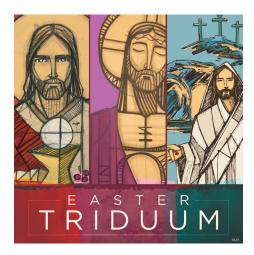
Please join us for our monthly Praise and Worship Prayer Service at Christ the King on Sunday, March 17, at 5:30 pm. These services include Praise and Worship music led by our Raised in Glory Band, scripture, prayer, and healing.

March 25: Day of Reconciliation

On the Monday of Holy Week, Father Rich will offer additional confession times. Confessions will be heard in the church confessional at 11:00 am-12:00 pm, 1:00-2:00 pm, and 5:00-7:00 pm.

March 27: Tenebrae Service

Tenebrae means "darkness" and refers to the singing of the Divine Office in the days leading up to Easter Sunday. We will hold our Tenebrae Service at 7:30 pm in the church. Reading and psalms, along with music pieces, will help you to prayerfully prepare for the Triduum.



March 28: Holy Thursday

Today, we commemorate the Last Supper of Jesus Christ. Mass is available at 7:00 pm in the church. After Mass, adoration will be available until 10:00 pm in the Parish Activity Center.

March 29: Good Friday

On Good Friday, we gather to commemorate the Crucifixion and Death of Jesus Christ. At 12:10 pm, Stations of the Cross will be prayed in the church. Services will be offered at 3:00 pm and 7:00 pm in the church. Good Friday is a day of fast and abstinence, meaning a person should eat one full meal, as well as two smaller meals that together are not equal to a full meal as well as eating no meat. (The Parish Office will be closed on Good Friday.)

March 30: Easter Vigil

Tonight, we celebrate the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. The Easter Vigil will be at 8:00 pm in the church.

March 31: Easter Sunday

Today, we celebrate the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. Mass will be available in the church at 7:00 am, 9:00 am, and 11:00 am.

APRIL 2024

April 1-7: Easter Octave

The celebration of Our Lord's Resurrection continues for eight days and is called the Octave of Easter. Each day of the octave is ranked as a solemnity. So keep the celebration going!

April 5 & 7: Emmaus

This month, we will discuss "Consecrated: The Sacraments of Holy Orders & Matrimony." For more information, visit **christthekingnh.org/emmaus**.

April 13: Eucharistic Revival Retreat

Join us for the Eucharistic Revival Retreat with the Sisters of the Daughters of Mary, Mother of Healing Love. The retreat will be held on Saturday, April 13, from 8:30 am-2:00 pm at Christ the King Parish. \$5 registration fee. A light lunch will be included. Sponsored by the Women's Ministry. Visit **christthekingnh. org/retreat** for more information.

SPECIAL COLLECTIONS

March 2 & 3: Food Pantry (Parish) Easter Flowers (Parish)

March 9 & 10:

Fuel & Utilities (Parish) Catholic Relief Services/Catholic Home Mission (National)

March 16 & 17: Maintenance (Parish)

March 23 & 24: Rice Bowl (National)

March 29 - Good Friday: Holy Land (National)

March 30 & 31: Easter (Parish)

CONTACT INFO



Christ the King Parish 72 South Main Street, Concord, NH 03301 603.224.2328 | christthekingnh.org

Weekend Masses Sat: 4:00 pm | Sun: 7:00 am, 9:00 am, 11:00 am

Weekday Masses Mon, Wed, Fri: 12:10 pm | Thurs: 5:30 pm

Confession/Reconciliation Thurs: 4:45-5:15 pm | Sat: 2:30-3:30 pm

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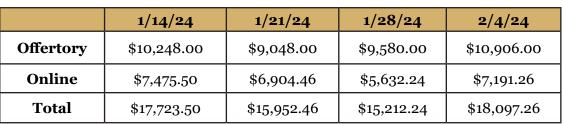
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MONTHLY OFFERTORY REPORT





To make a donation to the parish,

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